



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
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ATLANTA GEORGIA 30303-8960

May 18, 2010

Ms. Pamela M. Kordenbrock, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Tennessee Division
404 BNA Drive, Suite 508
Nashville, Tennessee 37217

SUBJECT: Final Environmental Impact Statement for U.S. 127/State Route 28 Improvements
from I-40 at Crossville to State Route 62 at Clarkrange in Cumberland and
Fentress Counties, Tennessee; CEQ Number 20100134

Dear Ms. Kordenbrock:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the referenced Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in accordance with its responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) propose to improve an approximate 14-mile section of U.S. 127/State Route (SR) 28 from Interstate 40 in Crossville north to the intersection of U.S. 127 and SR 62 in Clarkrange in Cumberland and Fentress Counties, Tennessee.

The FEIS consisted of a No-Build and One Build Alternative (the Blue Alternative) with three options (Green, Yellow and Orange). The Blue Alternative proposes to upgrade existing roadway segments to either a four-lane roadway or a five-lane roadway that would extend from I-40 to Crossville North to the intersection U.S. 127 and SR 62 in Clarkrange. The preferred alternative is the Blue Alternative with a four-lane cross section. This alternative includes a five-lane cross section with curb and gutter and sidewalks in Section 1 at the beginning of the project and Section 6, at the end of the project and a four-lane cross section with a 48 foot depressed median in Sections 2 – 5.

In general, EPA supports the preferred alternative. However, we continue to be concerned regarding the impacts of the proposed project to the Obed Wild and Scenic River (WSR) system. The preferred alternative is not within the boundaries of the Obed WSR system; however, the Obed WSR is located just downstream of the project corridor. The National Park Service (NPS) has requested that the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) conduct a Section 7(a) determination as required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (reference NPS letter dated December 14, 2007). The NPS does acknowledge that it is premature to determine the impacts to the Obed WSR until the design and location of the proposed Clear Creek Bridge has been determined. This issue is not adequately explained or updated in the FEIS (specifically the Environmental Commitments section of the Executive Summary). EPA recommends that since

the required 7(a) determination was not completed in time for inclusion in the FEIS, that TDOT include a statement of commitment in the Record of Decision (ROD) to 1) complete the 7(a) determination process and 2) adjust the bridge design and placement as appropriate to minimize and mitigate any impacts.

We appreciated the opportunity to review the proposed action. Please contact Jamie Higgins at (404) 562-9681 if you want to discuss this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Mueller', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Policy and Management

Enclosure

cc: Tennessee Department of Transportation